

Profile

July 1988

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PROFILE's March issue features a story about the Army airborne soldiers. It also includes articles on the Coast Guard radarmen; the Air Force Honor Guard; the Marine Corps crew chiefs; and the Navy interior communication technicians.



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Profile

a guide to military careers Vol. 31 No. 4, February 1988

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Front: A Marine Corps infantryman prepares to go to the field for training. (U.S. Marine Corps photo)

Back: A Navy aviation boatswains mate guides an F-14 into position. (Photo by JO3 Dennis Tressic)



An infantryman defends his perimeter. (U.S. Marine Corps photo)

Confident and Proud

by SFC Karen Polston

The Marine Corps infantryman was hiding in a tree, waiting to ambush "enemy" forces. It was hot, even in the shade, with temperatures edging near the "scorching" range.

The camouflage paint that had been applied to the infantryman's face was sticky, but it served its purpose to help him blend in with his surroundings.

Suddenly, the Marine tensed. His hands gripped his rifle a little harder and his attention was focused on the "enemy" crawling through the underbush beneath him.

Although the Marine and his infantry company were involved in a field exercise and the "enemy" wasn't really an enemy, the training was taken quite seriously.

"When we go out in the field to train, we train hard," explained Lance Cpl. Larry Romine, assigned to Golf Company, 2nd Battalion, 2nd Marines at Camp Lejeune, N.C. "In an actual combat situation we have to be perfect in everything we do. We have to train to survive."

Cpl. James Gray, also assigned to Golf Company, echoed Romine's thoughts. "Practice makes perfect. If it ever comes down to actual combat, we want to



An infantryman takes aim. (U.S. Marine Corps photo)

make sure everyone knows what to do. That's why we train constantly.

"Our training isn't limited to physical conditioning and basic survival techniques. We also learn the aspects of military tactics and strategies that we're likely to be involved with, as well as how to work together as a team.

"Each individual on the team must be independent enough to stand alone, and at the same time, be someone others in the unit can depend on for assistance," Gray explained.

"Infantrymen have very diverse job requirements. We must know how to train and conduct warfare operations in a variety of environments, including deserts, mountains, jungles, woods, urban areas and during amphibious assaults.

"Infantrymen have to learn how to adapt," said Gray. "We could be training in the desert tomorrow and in the mountains next week. The variety makes this job exciting, and I've learned to challenge myself and those in my unit to push to the limit."

Marines learn infantry skills during a six-week course at either Camp Lejeune, or at Camp Pendleton, Calif. During classroom training and field exercises, the Marines are taught infantry tactics, how to construct and camouflage fighting positions, how to set up mines and demolitions, and how to use communication equipment.

After getting the basics of infantry tactics in school, constant training with their units refines the infantry skills and molds the Marines into a fighting force to be reckoned with.

"I'm as confident as can be," Gray said. "If we go to war tomorrow...sure, most everyone is going to be scared, but we are confident in ourselves and in the other Marines around us. I'd trust anybody in my platoon with my life." ◻



Fatigue shows on the faces of the participants of the march. (U.S. Marine Corps photo)



Hiding in a tree, an infantryman aims his rifle on the "enemy." (U.S. Marine Corps photo)

Aviation Electrician's Mate

Story and photos
by JO3 Dennis Tressic

For 510 people, the early October morning started out as a relaxing pleasure cruise through the icy waters of the Gulf of Alaska. Suddenly, the oceanliner *Prisendam* erupted into a burning blaze. Panic and fear spread as quickly as the flames throughout the ship.

An area Coast Guard station was radioed to provide assistance which included aerial support for the passengers.

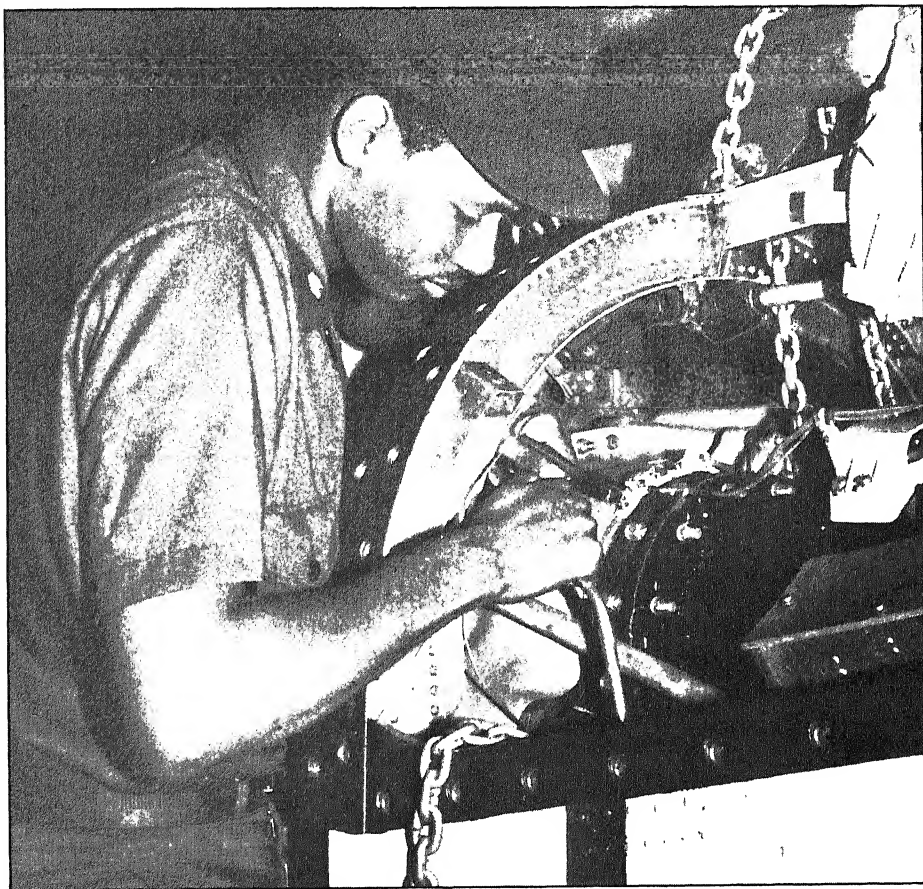
As the HC-130 aircraft was prepared for take-off, a malfunctioning altitude direction indicator was discovered.

Immediately, the aviation electrician's mates were called to resolve the problem. "Within a very short time we were able to replace the defective indicator, making the aircraft safe and ready to assist in the rescue operation," said Petty Officer 2nd Class Keith Mallory, an aviation electrician's mate.

A Coast Guard helicopter flew passengers suffering from exposure to the awaiting HC-130 aircraft staffed with medical personnel. The HC-130 then airlifted the passengers to medical facilities in Juneau.

Coast Guard electrician's mates are taught their trade at the five-month aviation electrician's mate "A" school, located at the Coast Guard Support Center, Elizabeth City, N.C.

"At the school, the history and basic concept of electricity, theory



AE2 Keith Mallory performs preventive maintenance on an aircraft engine.

of generators and motors is taught along with wiring, how to use electrical meters, take readings, do preventive maintenance and troubleshoot the basic systems of the various Coast Guard aircraft," stated Mallory.

"The variety of aircraft we work on include the HC-130s, H-3 helicopters, G-2 aircraft (used to transport visiting dignitaries) and HU-25 jets. Aviation electricians ensure all electrical systems on

these aircraft are always operational," explained Mallory, "including the fire warning, autopilot and battery and fuel systems."

Regardless of the mission requirements, be it a training exercise or an actual emergency, the responsibilities of the aviation electrician's mates never change. They always ensure their aircraft are safe and are ready to save others at a moment's notice. ☐



Sgt. Broger makes sure the patient is in the correct position for a chest X-ray.

Fixing what's broken

Story and photos
by SFC Karen Polston

The soldier walks into the emergency room with her arm hanging limp at her side. "I think I may have broken something," she says, looking rather pale.

The on-call physician takes a quick look at the arm and instructs her to go to the X-ray room. Before administering treatment, he needs to see what damage has been done.

"That's when my job begins," said Sgt. Othell Broger, an X-ray technician at McDonald Army Community Hospital, Fort Eustis, Va. "I'll position the patient on the table or in front of the chest X-ray machine (depending on the injury or the type of X-ray required) and take as many views as the doctor needs to help the patient.

"After the X-ray plates have been exposed, I slide the film out of the holder into the film processor and the finished X-ray is developed in approximately 90 seconds," Broger explained. "I also use a small portable X-ray unit to assist the doctor during surgery.

"Our work load here consists mainly of X-raying broken arms and legs and doing chest X-rays for physicals. However, should a critical situation

arise, I've been trained as an emergency medical technician and I'm qualified to treat a more seriously injured patient," he explained.

Army X-ray technicians learn the basics of their job in a six-month course taught at Fort Sam Houston, Texas. During the course, students learn anatomy, physiology, how to position a patient to take an X-ray and equipment operating procedures. After completing the course, students report to their duty station for on-the-job training.

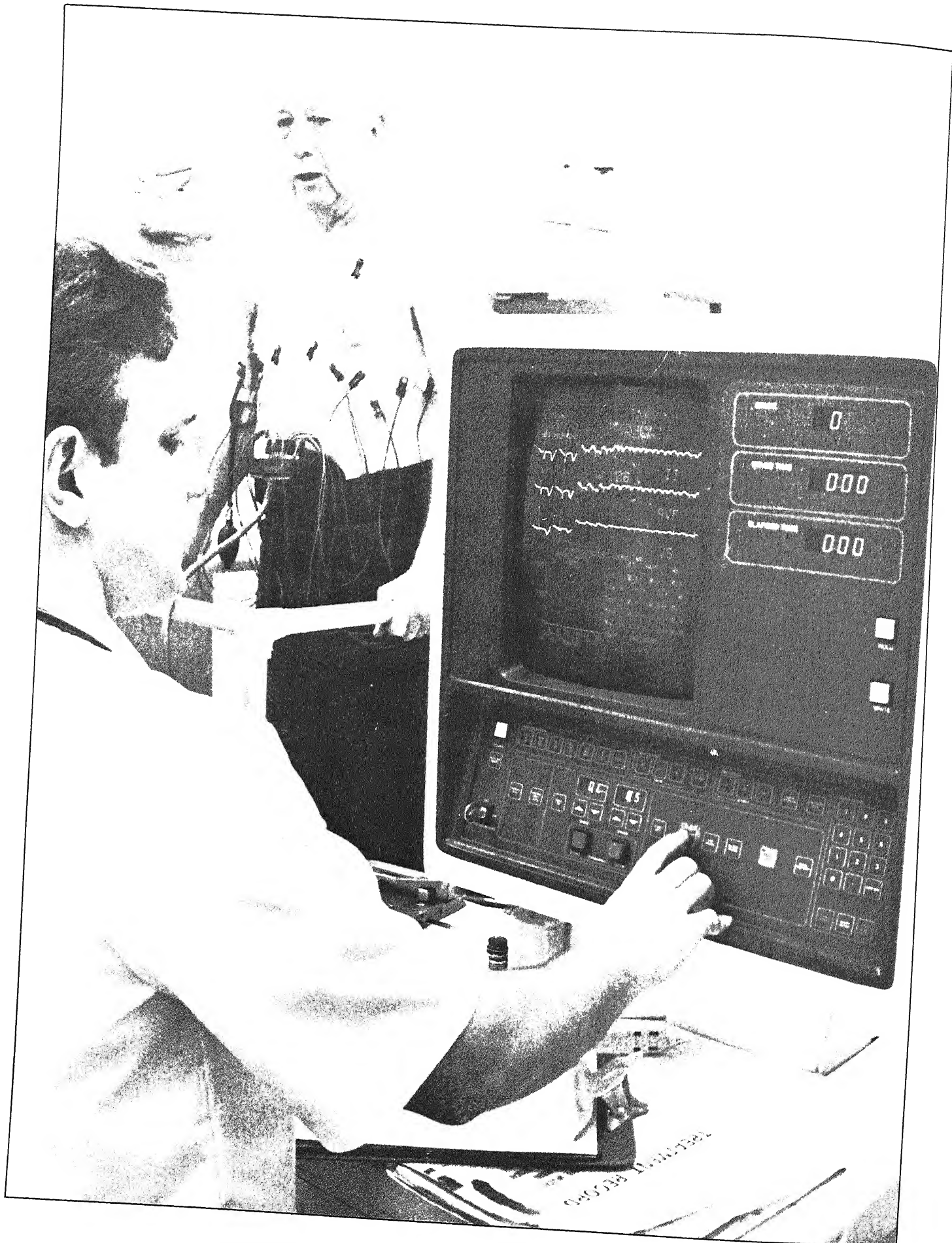
"This field isn't strictly limited to the standard X-ray machine," Broger said. "The technician can also get experience on ultrasound (using sound waves), and Magnetic Resonance Images (MRI), where images are obtained from using magnetic particles. There's no radiation in this process. The technology is constantly changing and improving, but there will always be a need for qualified technicians.

"The experience and opportunities available to the Army X-ray technician are hard to beat. After serving in the military, a technician is able to enter the civilian sector and continue in the health care profession," he explained.

"Providing care and helping patients to regain their health is what's important," Broger concluded. "To the person suffering with a broken arm or leg, getting the 'hurt' fixed is all that counts." 



Sgt. Broger aligns the X-ray machine over the patient.



Marriage of the Heart

**Story and photos
by SSgt Linda Mitchell**

There's a song from an old musical about love and marriage going together like a horse and carriage. It further states that you "can't have one without the other."

Human bodies produce another such "marriage"-- the heart pumps blood and oxygen to the lungs, and the lungs send oxygen to the brain and heart. Air Force cardiopulmonary laboratory specialists make sure this biological "marriage" functions properly to keep patients alive and healthy.

"A cardiopulmonary laboratory specialist's job entails screening for heart and lung disease during physical exams, but we also work with patients suffering from a wide variety of other heart and lung disorders," said Senior Master Sgt. Wayne Ditto. Ditto is the noncommissioned officer in charge of the cardiopulmonary laboratory in the 1st Medical Group Hospital, Langley Air Force Base, Va.

"We use electrocardiographs (EKGs) and other devices to monitor heart functions and pulse rates," he continued. "These diagnostic machines track the chemical stimulus that passes through the heart muscle causing it to contract. Normal impulses, or abnormalities caused by a chemical imbalance, are displayed on a computer printout as a wave form. From this printout we can determine what might be causing the heart to beat differently from normal. These readings also help the doctor determine a proper treatment program."

The exam might also include an

arterial blood gasses test, which will catch any chemical abnormalities in the patient's bloodstream. "We draw blood from a main artery in the wrist or arm and analyze the blood for alkaline, acid, carbon dioxide and oxygen levels. This test provides a good indication of how well the heart, lungs and kidneys are functioning," Ditto explained.

Echocardiograms are ultrasound tests which are used to examine heart functions. "As we move the ultrasound wand across the area," Ditto explained, "one- and two-dimensional pictures are created on film. While viewing this film on a computer terminal, we can make necessary measurements, such as determining the cardiac output (how much blood flows through the ventricles with each beat) by punching in code numbers on the computer. Additionally, we can check the patient's heart valve functions and measure the thickness of the heart muscle."

Cardiopulmonary laboratory specialists in the respiratory treatment area work with patients who need mechanical assistance to breathe. Those who can't breathe on their own are placed on ventilators closely monitored by the specialists. Patients with damaged lungs or who have undergone lung surgery may need oxygen therapy and medication to clean out their lungs and enlarge the airways.

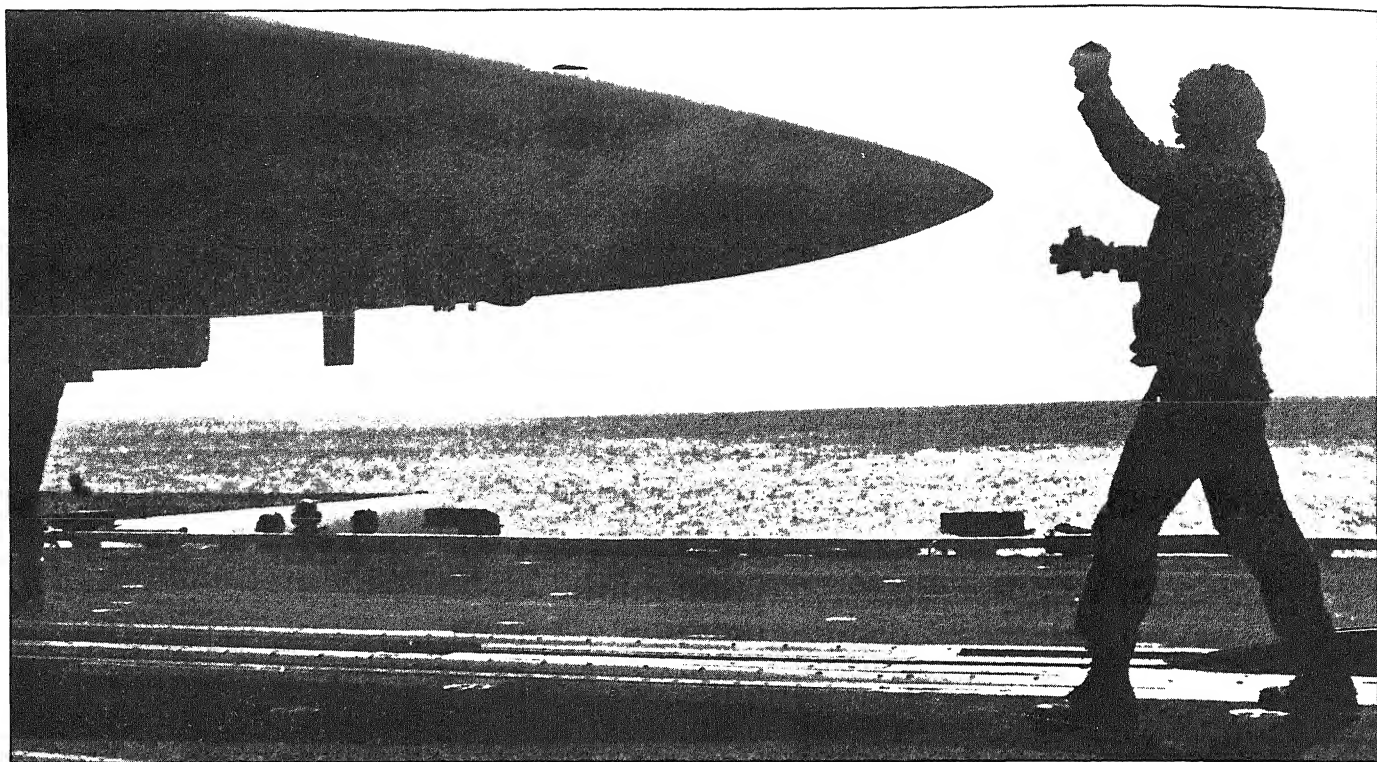
Patients with other respiratory ailments, such as asthma, are also seen by cardiopulmonary laboratory specialists. "Cardiopulmonary specialists also conduct intensive cardiac exercise stress tests on patients under the supervision of an internist," Ditto said.

"After placing them on the treadmill and monitoring pulse rates during an exercise period, we mechanically measure the amount of air inhaled and exhaled after timed periods."

If assigned to an Air Force medical center, cardiopulmonary laboratory specialists would assist doctors, cardiac nurses and radiology technicians during cardiac catheterization operations. "During this procedure, a catheter filled with dye is injected into the body through a main artery and/or vein," Ditto explained. "A computer terminal and screen operated by the cardiopulmonary technician records the impulses transmitted by the catheter and monitors the progress of the dye and other chemical and pressure techniques through the body. The doctor can evaluate the functions of the heart's valves and chambers by watching the operation on the screen."

Airmen entering this career field attend nearly one year of training. Phase I is conducted at Sheppard Air Force Base, Texas, where the basics of physiology, physics, chemistry, anatomy and machine operation are taught. Nearly nine months of on-the-job training follow at one of five Air Force medical centers. This includes half days of classroom work and half days of supervised hands-on experience with patients.

During the long, hard training, new cardiopulmonary laboratory specialists learn how different and separate the functions of the lungs and heart are. But they also realize that in the biological "marriage" of life you "can't have one without the other." 



Prior to launch, an ABH directs a pilot along the flight deck.

Ready to Roll...

Story and photos
by JO3 Dennis Tressic

Almost everyone has heard the advertisements on TV and the radio about the Navy proclaiming that... "It's not just a job, it's an adventure."

In these advertisements, there's usually an aircraft carrier shown with high-performance aircraft launching and landing. In order for these planes to take off, however, they must first be fueled, directed and launched by the backbone of the aviation field—aviation boatswain's mates (ABs).

"The aviation boatswain's mates job can be dangerous, especially if an AB is assigned to an aircraft carrier. The rotor and jet blast makes the flight deck a hazardous four and one half acres," said Navy Ensign Donald Fortmuller, air boatswain aboard USS Coral Sea.

"Because of the possible dangers working on the flight deck, we must always remain alert. Everyone works as a team to make each aircraft launch and recovery a success," Fortmuller stated.

"Our job, as members of the flight deck crew, is to prepare each aircraft for flight operations. We direct, fuel and get the aircraft ready for launch. We then hook the aircraft up to the catapults and launch them. On recovery, the aircraft is stopped by arresting gear, which is operated and maintained by

ABs. Rescue equipment is always manned by crash and rescue teams who are ready to respond to any potential emergency," Fortmuller said.

"The aviation boatswain's mate rate is divided into three sub-ratings," Fortmuller continued.

"Aviation boatswain's mate, handler (ABH) directs and moves the aircraft and handles the rescue gear. The aviation boatswain's mate, fuel (ABF) refuels the aircraft, maintains various fueling stations and pump rooms, and purifies the fuel for the aircraft. The aviation boatswain's mate, catapults and arresting gear (ABE) works with the equipment responsible for launching and landing aircraft.

"This rate can be learned through on-the-job training or by attending the aviation boatswain's mate school at Lakehurst, N.J. During the seven-week school, students are taught by working on a model aircraft carrier flight deck, using simulated catapults, arresting gear, working in the simulated catapult engine rooms and fuel stations," said Fortmuller.

"Aircraft carriers are floating air fields, with the capabilities to go anywhere in the world," Fortmuller added. "As an AB on a carrier, there's never a dull moment and we get to see the world. Everything around us is fast-moving and like the advertisements say... 'It's not just a job, it's an adventure!'" 



Airman Bob Felice, an ABH, plots aircraft movements on a carrier's flight deck using scale models.



An ABH guides an aircraft to the catapults.



An electronics technician removes the nosecone of a drone to work on the sensitive radar equipment.

Desert Navy

by SFC Karen Polston

The deserts of New Mexico are hot and arid. Small, sparse vegetation dots the flat countryside. There's no water in sight. Because there's no ocean, sea, lake or even a puddle for miles around, it's the last place you'd expect to find the Navy.

Yet, amazingly in the middle of the desert at White Sands Missile Range, an Army-managed installation, there are sailors and even a land-locked vessel, the USS Desert Ship.

This desert Navy makes up the Naval Ordnance Missile Test Station, (NOMTS), which has been part of the range since June 1946 when it was established to test and research captured World War II German V-2 rockets.

The rocket research program continues today with two launch complexes dedicated to supporting NASA, the Naval Research Laboratory, the Air Force Geophysics Laboratory, and various domestic and foreign universities, according to Cmdr. G.D. Love, executive officer of NOMTS.

"Our mission is to conduct and support the assigned Navy guided missile, rocket, gun, and directed energy programs. We do ground flight tests, supply the targets, evaluate the tests and schedule range testing dates," Love stated.

"In 1984, NOMTS merged with the Navy High Energy Laser Program Office Detachment to begin testing directed energy weapons systems," Love continued. "With the Mid-Infrared Advanced Chemical Laser, (MIRACL), the free world's most powerful chemical laser, NOMTS also supports the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI) program. In 1985, the construction of the beam director was completed. This beam director accepts the light beam from the laser and directs the beam to the target."

What's it like being a sailor on the desert? Petty Officer 1st Class Jeffrey W. Hanson, a gunner's

mate, enjoys the job. "I'm not really crazy about the area, but the research and technology I work with is incredible. As a gunner's mate, I assist in the assembly, testing and firing of the Standard missile.

"The USS Desert Ship was built in 1953 and has the same fire control and weapons systems that would be found in a modern surface combatant ship," Hanson explained. "This land-locked vessel is capable of test firing the Standard missile and our five-inch, 54-caliber munitions in support of tests."

Petty Officer 1st Class Bradley Schild, an electronics technician, said, "As an electronics technician, I work with the target drones that are used during the tests. The drones are equipped with highly technical electronic systems in their 'nose' compartments. The electronics technicians make sure this equipment is functioning properly and prepare the drones for various tests.

"I enjoy the desert duty because it allows me to be home with my family every night. I love the Navy, but if I was stationed in Norfolk, Va., on a ship, I'm sure I would go to sea for months at a time. As part of the 'desert Navy,' I'm home for dinner every night. It's great for the family life," Schild explained.

According to Petty Officer 2nd Class Dan Ryan, a fire controlman, "It's rather odd being Navy on an Army post. The two services have minor differences that take some getting used to. For instance, in the Navy, we raise our flags at 8 a.m. and lower them at sunset. The Army raises their flags at sunrise and lowers them at 5 p.m. It's nothing major, just different."

Whatever the differences, the "desert Navy" sailors make their presence known. Although the arid terrain of White Sands Missile Range is the last place one would expect to find the Navy, sailors operating the USS Desert Ship continue their efforts in developing and testing weapons of the future. ◻



An Army orthotics technician assigned to Walter Reed U.S. Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C., assembles a metal leg brace.

Standing Alone

Story and photos
by SSgt Linda Mitchell

As little Theresa stood without human support for the first time, her parents cried.

Born with scoliosis (curvature of the spine), three-year-old Theresa had never been able to stand without someone holding her. Now, with the assistance of an orthotic device called a standing brace, she stood "alone."

The standing brace and a multitude of other orthotic devices are created by Army, Navy and Air Force orthotics/occupational therapy technicians.

"We make braces for every extremity and the back," said Petty Officer 1st Class Lynnellen Phillips, an occupational therapy technician at the Portsmouth Naval Hospital, Portsmouth, Va. "These include ankle/foot braces; arch supports for patients suffering from flat feet; plastic braces and splints for arms, fingers and legs; and body jackets to help correct scoliosis."

They also construct a working splint, which supports the broken wrist and allows the fingers and thumb free movement. An odd-looking device called an airplane splint "wraps around the patient's waist and holds the arm up at a 90 degree angle with the elbow bent, and is used after shoulder surgery," Phillips added.

"Most of our braces and splints are constructed from low- and high-temperature plastic, although Army technicians do

make metal leg braces," said Sgt. GERALYNN LeRoy, an orthotic technician at Walter Reed U.S. Army Medical Center, Washington, D.C.

Making a high-temp brace involves making a plaster cast of the extremity. The cast is filled with more plaster, which hardens into a mold.

"Braces made of high temperature plastic must be formed around a plaster mold because it takes about 400-degree heat to melt the plastic. Low temperature braces are a lot quicker to make and can be molded directly on the patient. Because they are less sturdy than high-temp braces, however, they're usually used on the upper extremities, where weight bearing isn't involved," LeRoy added. After the plastic hardens, velcro straps, pads, hinges and other necessary devices are attached before the brace is fitted on the patient.

"When a metal brace is required, we make a pattern by tracing the patient's extremity, marking boney areas and joints," said Sgt. Warren D. Miller, an orthotic technician at Walter Reed. "Using machine shop tools, we construct everything from simple

lower leg braces with or without orthopedic shoes, to extremely complex body braces with a multitude of hinges, bolts, straps and pads."

Navy, Army and Air Force orthotic/occupational therapy technicians learn their trade at Fort Sam Houston, near San Antonio, Texas. Students learn anatomy, physiology and some psychiatry in order to work with patients. They also practice making the wide variety of braces and splints, using classmates as "patients." Additionally, Navy personnel learn occupational therapy techniques. "We are taught how to help amputees learn to use their new prosthesis, such as hooks and artificial arms and legs," Phillips explained.

Basic technical school is followed by hands-on supervised training at medical centers and major hospitals in the different services.

There's a lot of hard work and training involved in becoming an orthotic/occupational therapy technician, but the rewards make it more than worthwhile. "Seeing the look on Mom's and Dad's faces when their child stands 'alone' for the first time is my reward," Phillips concluded. ▢

Petty Officer 1st Class Lynnellen Phillips prepares a plastic mold prior to making a plaster leg cast.



Nuts and Bolts

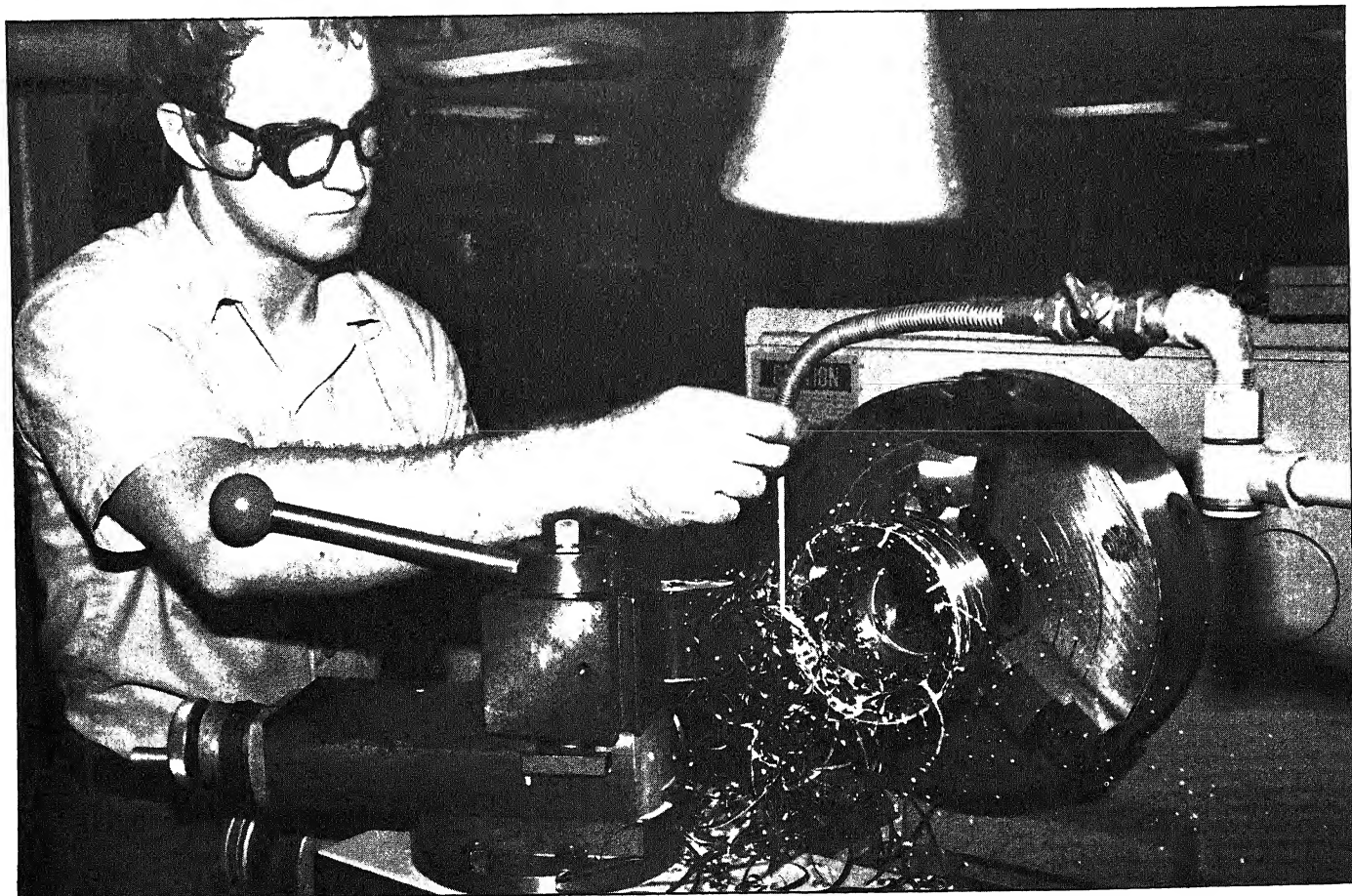
Story and photos
by JO3 Dennis Tressic

Whether it's typewriters or the mighty engines of an aircraft carrier, the absence of even one small bolt, screw or part could mean the difference between operating effectively or as the saying goes, "sitting dead in the water."

While in port, any broken machinery on the ships can be sent to base repair shops. But what happens when the ships are miles from shore?

"Like other ships, the USS Coral Sea has machine repairmen who have the skills and on board equipment to keep machinery running smoothly," stated Petty Officer 2nd Class Thomas Falk, a machine repairman (MR).

"Every division on this ship will at one time or another have to work through this shop. It may be nothing more than engraving name tags or repairing a cook's donut flipper. However, it could also be something as major as repairing the ship's main engine components," Falk said.



Petty Officer 3rd Class Thomas Walser uses a lathe to cut a hardened steel socket.

"Machine repairmen know that each day will bring different repair jobs," said Petty Officer 1st Class Charles Blood, supervisor of the machine repair shop.

"Every job is a challenge, whether it's manufacturing a small brass ring for a fuel pump or replacing a broken gear in a clock. Sometimes it's difficult to figure out what the dimensions of a part are and then make a new one," said Blood.

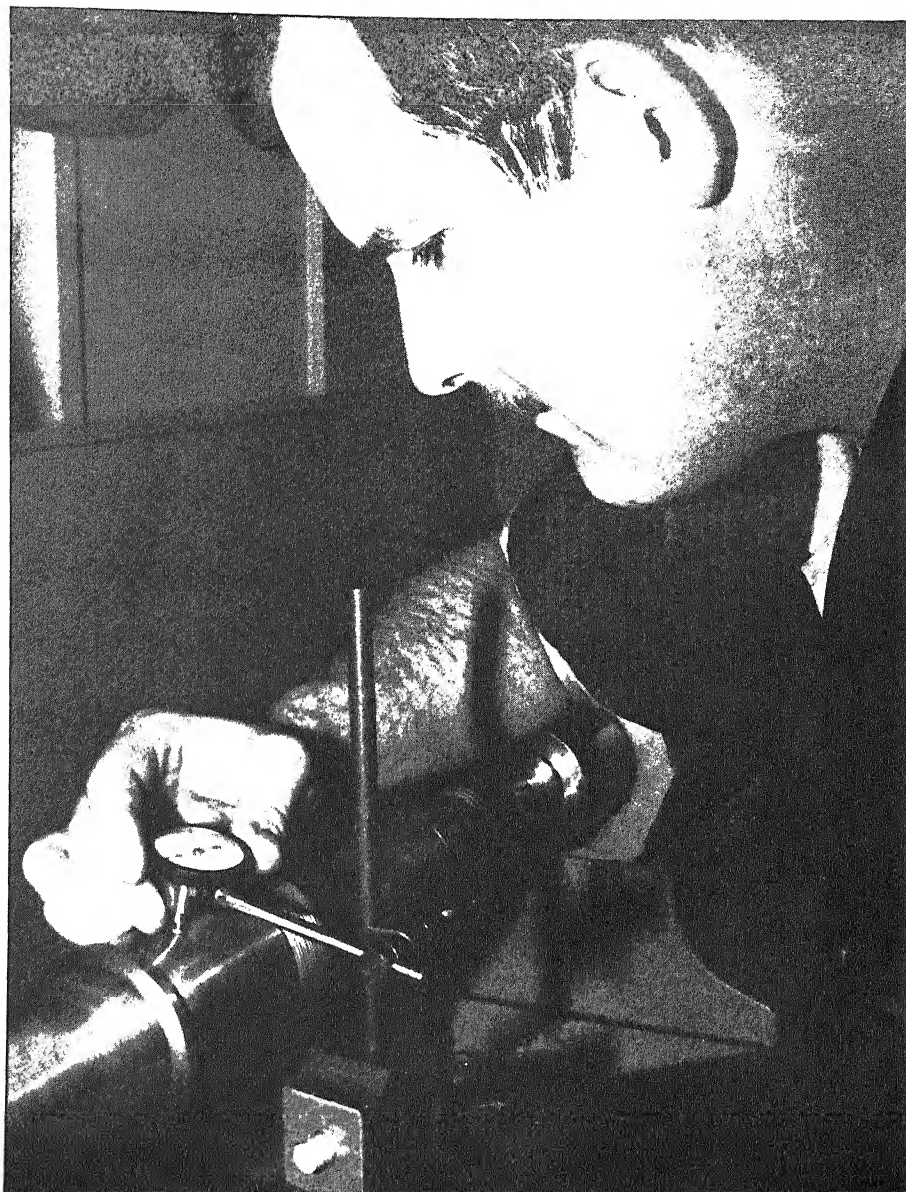
"When we make a part, we may take a piece of aluminum, copper, brass or stainless steel, and make it into a functional part of a larger machine," Blood said.

"Our biggest challenge is keeping the ship's engineering plant turning and burning," Falk continued. "If a part on the engine breaks, we must be able to fix it as soon as possible to keep the ship mobile."

MR's learn the basics of machine repair in a 12-week school at the Naval Training Center, San Diego, Calif.

"The school instructors teach basic theory and operations of most shop machines and tools such as milling machines, lathes, drill presses, radial presses and electroplating," Falk added.

"It's always a possibility that while we're underway any given work section on board might have need of our services," Falk explained. "Whatever the needs may be, the machine repairmen will be ready and able to repair it or make it right." ♠



Petty Officer 2nd Class J.B. Smith takes a dial indication reading on a pump shaft.



Petty Officer 3rd Class Kenny Shelton prepares to engrave a nameplate.

South of the Border



Story and photos
by SFC Karen Polston

Imagine getting a two-nation vacation for the price of one. Visitors to El Paso, Texas, have the opportunity to do that by just walking across the border into Juarez, Mexico.

El Paso residents, including military members and their families stationed at Fort Bliss, home of Army Air Defense, are able to make daily excursions into Juarez to shop or enjoy dinner south of the border.

Whether visitor or resident, crossing the border is easy. American and Canadian citizens visiting Juarez for less than 72 hours don't need special papers or visas. There are three bridges visitors can use to cross the border via walking, driving or catching a taxi. There's a small toll to pay at each bridge (approximately 10 cents).

When crossing over into Mexico, advise the Mexican customs officer of the intent and length of stay. There's no language barrier since border officials speak English.

Once in the city of Juarez, there's plenty to see and experience. Throughout the central section of the city are sites of historic interest, including the lava stone government buildings and the classic bullfighting arena. The oldest historic site is the Guadalupe Mission which was built in 1659 by Spanish missionaries. The small church is located in the city's central square next to the Juarez cathedral.

Visitors can also take in the sights at the popular tourist attractions. These include the Ballet Folklorica, a program of Mexican folk dances and music and the Charriada, a Mexican style rodeo.

Those interested in greyhound racing can observe the action at the Juarez racetrack, in the glass-enclosed, air conditioned viewing stand. The dogs give it their all Wednesdays through Sundays year round. During the summer, the track converts to horse racing on Sundays.

Sidewalk cafes line the streets for those folks who just want to relax with something cold to drink. Strolling musicians serenade cafe patrons with Mexican folk songs; however, the musicians will attempt to perform American rock and roll classics if requested. A small tip is appreciated for the music.

Another favorite pastime is shopping for souvenirs. A kaleidoscope of colorful handicrafts, paper flowers, leather goods, silver, tin, and pottery are on display. Vendors, carrying their wares, stroll through the streets, stopping at sidewalk cafes to entice buyers.

The traditional shopping area is the Pronaf, a government-built shopping center designed to show off the best in Mexican arts and crafts. Another shoppers' haven is the City Market, a large two-story building filled to the roof with fresh fruits, vegetables, spices, and herbs, as well as popular

A musician serenades the patrons in a sidewalk cafe.



Walking across the bridge from the United States into Mexico offers this view of the Rio Grande River.

tourist items, such as clothing, rugs, and leather goods. Prices are extremely low and bargaining with the shop keepers may result in an even better buy.

Coming back into the United States with purchases is also easy. U.S. law allows each citizen to bring back, duty free, articles for personal or household use valued up to \$100, once every 30 days. However, certain items such as agricultural products, are not allowed back into Texas and will be confiscated at the border by U.S. customs officials. A list of contraband articles is available at the border customs office.

Whether the visit is for the first time or an everyday occurrence, a trip to Juarez is an experience. El Paso visitors and residents are just a short stroll away from a "two-nation vacation" for the price of one. ◻



Spec. 4 Phillips calls up a flight plan on the computer to check a timetable.

Getting 'em off the ground

**Story and photos
by SFC Karen Polston**

The airfield is the scene of plenty of activity. Army helicopters take off and land with precision. The movements of the pilots are controlled and steady.

Spec. 4 Stephen Phillips and Spec. 4 Nabor Pineiro Jr., flight operations coordinators at Felker Army Airfield at Fort Eustis,

Va., keep a close watch on the comings and goings of the assigned aircraft. In the corner of their office, the weather equipment clicks off its hourly report and the radio to the flight tower continuously chatters static.

"The pilots flying from Felker Army Airfield file their flight plans with us. After ensuring the plans are correct, we submit the information to the flight tower," Phillips said. "We request route

clearance and, in essence, 'reserve' the air space for the flight. We then inform the air operations coordinators at the pilot's destination of the aircraft's expected arrival time.

"If a flight is overdue, (30 minutes for a helicopter and 15 minutes for fixed wing aircraft), it's the responsibility of the flight coordinators at the intended destination to attempt to locate that pilot. They begin by backtracking

Spec. 4 Pineiro calls a flight plan over to the control tower.

the pilot's route to ensure the flight left on schedule. When every effort to locate the pilot and aircraft have failed, a search and rescue mission is called out," he said.

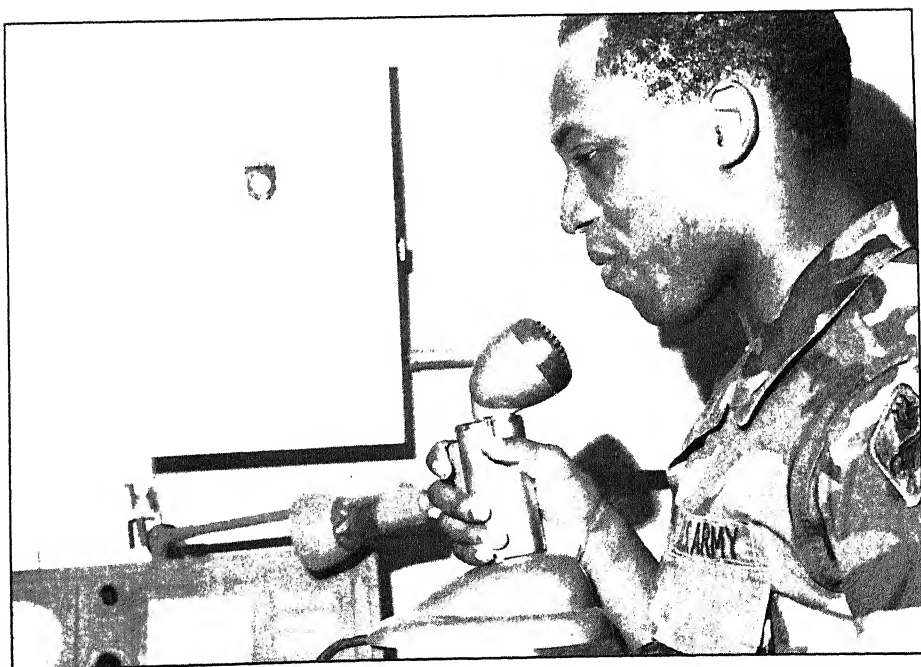
"In addition to flight dispatch, we also have the responsibility to schedule flights," Phillips said. "For example, if a hospital patient needs to be transferred to another facility, we coordinate with the pilots to set up the route and obtain any equipment the patient may need during the flight."

"Maintaining flight records is also part of our job" Pineiro said. "We must keep an accurate, current account of the hours flown by the pilots and the flight crews assigned to Felker Army Airfield. Each pilot and crew member is authorized a certain amount of flight time per month. It's our responsibility to keep those records straight."

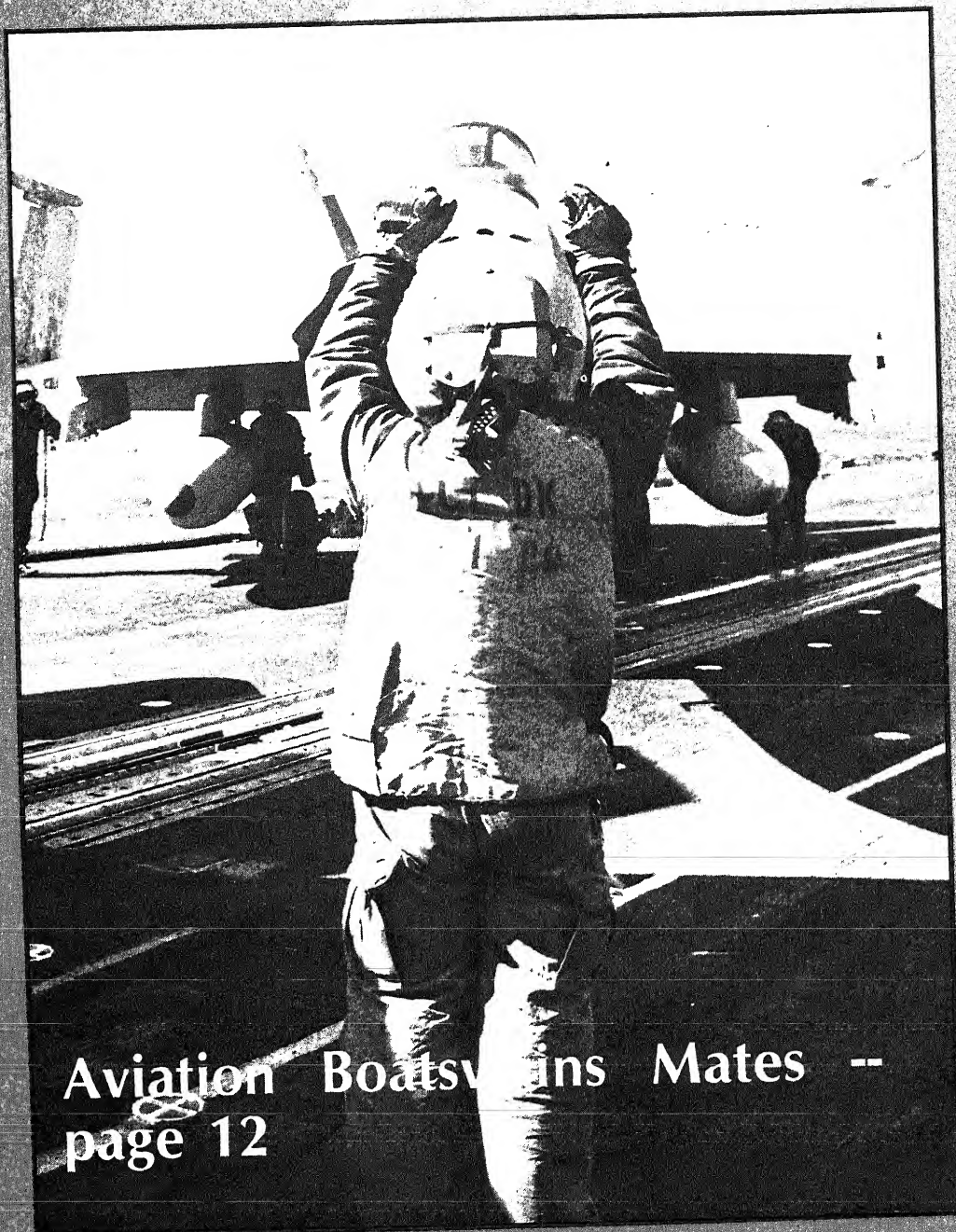
Army flight operations coordinators learn the skills required for their job during a seven-week course at Fort Rucker, Ala. The students learn to transmit flight plans to the tower, to correctly fill out the flight plan forms, Federal Aviation Administration regulations, how to accurately read weather forecasts, what to do in the event of an overdue aircraft and how to identify the various aircraft in the Army's inventory. "We also learn proper Army procedures for communicating on the radio," Phillips said.

The two flight operations controllers turn their attentions back to the flight plans that have just been filed. Phillips glances out the window to watch a helicopter take off. "We strive to be as knowledgeable as the pilots on the rules and regulations of flying," Phillips concluded. "After all, it's our job to get them where they're going safely." ◻

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Spec. 4 Phillips talks to the tower over the radio.



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The reward of a thing well done is to
have done it.

Ralph Waldo Emerson

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